

# Arts Visibility

## Dyer Library / Saco Museum

1. Describe the project that your grant request would support and explain how the funding will increase the visibility of that project.

The Saco Museum seeks \$1,500 from the Arts Visibility program to support the presentation and promotion of the 2012 Millennial, a biennial juried exhibition of contemporary art connected to the Cities on the Saco. Works in all media are sought by artists who can demonstrate a significant connection to Saco, Biddeford, or Old Orchard Beach. The Millennial is a collaborative project involving the Saco Museum and Engine, a new nonprofit arts organization in Biddeford. The exhibition will be on view in at both organizations' facilities April 6 through June 10, 2012; with the 500seat auditorium of Biddeford's City Theater set aside for film or performance pieces that may be juried into the exhibition. The project is designed to celebrate our community through our local art and artists.

We seek to build upon the resounding success of the 2010 Millennial by engaging an even larger audience through the 2012 show. We plan to achieve this through a twophase publicity and visibility campaign, involving printed materials, paid advertising, signage, regional press releases, email promotions, web promotions, and social media. The first phase is currently in motion and involves promotion and dissemination of the Call for Entries. The second phase involves promotion of the exhibition itself; all funds requested from the Maine Arts Commission will go toward this second phase of our marketing campaign.

2. Identify the target audience for your project and the specific marketing plan you will use to reach this audience.

Our target audiences fall into three intersecting categories: 1) working artists who are eligible for the exhibition; 2) potential visitors to the exhibition in the Cities on the Saco, Maine, and New England; and 3) professionals at arts organizations who would like to learn more about the art being produced in this area.

The first phase of the campaign, promoting the Call for Entries, focuses primarily on the first and third target audiences, as we seek to promote the call for entries directly to working artists as well as through the arts organizations with which they may be affiliated. Individual artists will receive a mailed copy of the call for entries as well as a pdf version by email; bundles of calls for entries and fliers promoting it will be mailed to art schools, artists' organizations, and other arts institutions in Southern Maine (they will also receive the pdf version of the call for entries by email); fliers promoting the call for entries will be distributed at key locations in southern Maine; advertisements for the call for entries will appear in Art New England, Artscope Magazine, and the local weekly newspapers covering Saco, Biddeford, and Old Orchard Beach; and a regional press release will announce the availability of the call for entries. Extensive use will also be made of the Saco Museum's and Engine's active Facebook sites, to promote directly the call for entries and to guide users to website features like the press release, the downloadable call for entries, and the museum director's blog.

The second phase of the promotional campaign seeks to address all three target audiences, with printed exhibition announcements and evites mailed directly to artists, arts organizations, and

members of the general public; posters distributed at key locations in Southern Maine; printing and distribution of a small number of exhibition catalogues (utilizing digital ondemand printing) for members of the press; exterior signage for the Saco Museum, Engine, and City Theater; regional press releases announcing the opening of the exhibition and the artist awards; paid advertisements in Art New England, the Portland Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram, and our local weeklies; and continued use of our website and Facebook page to promote the exhibition throughout its duration.

The strength of our strategy is the use of a wide variety of media and a combination of direct marketing with broader publicity campaigns. We hope and anticipate that this strategy combined with the momentum from our 2010 exhibition will lead to an even larger number of applications received (as compared to the 2010 exhibition, catalogues sold (both through the museum shop and digitally ondemand), individuals visiting the exhibition, "hits" on our website and Facebook page (as well as Engine's), and the number and quality of articles featured by media outlets. Increased visibility will also have less quantifiable, but no less real, benefits for our art community.

3. Demonstrate your ability or capacity to complete your project by either evidencing similar past projects, or by providing brief action steps for the completion of the one you are now proposing.

The 2012 Millennial will be the second presentation of a program that debuted, with great success, in 2010. Saco Museum Director Jessica Skwire Routhier drew upon years of experience with juried exhibitions at other institutions to design a project that could be managed efficiently with a small staff and a small budget while still producing an exhibition that demonstrates professionalism and vision. Based upon the success of the 2010 exhibition, many project elements will be repeated: the parameters for submissions, the basic process for jurying, the production of a catalogue through digital ondemand printing, the exhibition of work in multiple locations, the distribution of awards at the opening reception, etc. Substantive changes for 2012 include the expansion of the jurying team from one juror to three, and the partnership of Engine, which will provide an exhibit venue and provide design services and promotional and organizational assistance in exchange for the Saco Museum bearing all cash expenses for the project and managing the finances. In addition to this grant, other income anticipated for this project includes \$1,000 in entry fees (100 artists at \$10 each) and a \$2,000 corporate sponsorship. Added to earmarked funds from the museum's operating budget (furnished from a variety of sources), income will be sufficient to support the project as designed.

4. If applicable, provide evidence of the use of Maine vendors.

We will use local printers for the call for entries, exhibition announcement, posters, gallery signage, and exterior banners: Creative Imaging Group of Scarborough, Brown Fox Printing of Biddeford, and Spectrum Sign of Biddeford, respectively. Maine companies are also included among the media outlets that will receive revenue from paid advertising: The Portland Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram, the BiddefordSacoOld Orchard Beach Courier, and the BiddefordSacoOld Orchard Beach Sun Chronicle. If selected pieces are performed at City Theater, their contracted technical staff (all Mainers) will also be paid.

5. Provide a brief description of how your proposed project will support Maine's artists.

The Millennial is all about the artists. All of the marketing and publicity efforts described above are designed to promote a unique exhibition opportunity to area artists and to draw public attention to

their work. Every artist who applies for the Millennial will have his or her work seen and evaluated by the three jurors (Andres Versoza, director of Aucocisco Galleries in Portland; Ron Crusan, director of the Ogunquit Museum of American Art; and Berri Kramer, a fabric artist and President of Heartwood School of Art, Kennebunk), all of whom are experts in the field and are poised to provide additional opportunities. Artists accepted into the exhibition will also have their work seen by a large and diverse audience (attendance for the 2010 Millennial was 1,395) and have the opportunity to engage directly with that audience through exhibitionrelated programming like artists' talks and workshops. Programs and events also give artists the chance to connect with one another, fostering a sense of community among artists in the Cities on the Saco. Many artists who exhibit at the Saco Museum will sell the work that they have on view, furthering their development as professional artists (the Saco Museum does not act as a sales agent, but we do provide a readily accessible sales list and, on request, sales contact information). Each artist will also have a dedicated page in the catalogue with an illustration of their work as well as an artist's statement, furnishing them with yet another tool to share and promote their work.

One thousand dollars in awards (a juror's award or awards and possibly a purchase prize or prizes) will also benefit artists in the exhibition by providing additional recognition for a select group of participating artists, by providing a financial boon for the winning artists, and by potentially adding an artist or artists' work into the Saco Museum's collection. Though we are not requesting funds from the Maine Arts Commission to finance awards, we believe that their inclusion in the Millennial is essential. The promise of awards provides an initial incentive for artists to apply for the Millennial, thus strengthening the pool of applicants and ultimately the exhibition itself, as well as all its related components. And more importantly, awards translate the successes of the exhibition into a direct and tangible benefit for the winning artists.